II. — *Subject and Predicate*

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IT is remarkable and perhaps characteristic of the progress of investigation into the more habitual and socialized of our mental processes, that linguistic theory is by no means clear as to the nature of subject and predicate in language, in spite of the fact that our speech-feeling seems to distinguish quite clearly between predicating and non-predicating utterances. The prevalent view, expressed in our practical handbooks (*e.g.* Goodwin's *Greek Grammar*, 1897, p. 196 f.) and many of our scientific manuals (such as Paul's *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*[4], chap. 6), is that " every sentence contains two parts, a subject and a predicate." [1]   With this view the speech-feeling often enough comes into conflict, and we then resort to auxiliary hypotheses and forced interpretations of various kinds, saying, for instance, that one or the other of two parts is left unexpressed in exclamations such as *ouch !* or *fire !*, or that the two are contained in one word in such Latin sentences as *cantat*[2] or *pluit*,[3] or, worst of all, we deny the name of sentence to such utterances as *yes* or to answers such as *yesterday*.[4]

There is a psychologic principle coming to be more clearly recognized by students of language, which shows the way to a better interpretation of the process of utterance and of the

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[1] This notion arose in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; it appears in the Port-Royal *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* (1676), in Wolf, *Philosophia rationalis* (1732), in Hermann, *De emendanda ratione Graecae grammaticae* (1801), all quoted by Delbrück in the introduction to his *Syntax* (Brugmann and Delbrück, *Grundriss*, III), and in Bernhardi, *Anfangsgründe d. Sprachwissenschaft* (1805), quoted by Delbrück, *Einl. in d. Studium d. indogerm. Sprachen*[5], p. 34 ff.

[2] So even Delbrück, *Grundriss*, v, 10: " Bei der ersten und zweiten Person des Verbums steckt das Subjekt in der Verbalform."

[3] So even Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie*, II[3], 227 (" indefinite subject ").

[4] Wundt, *op. cit.* 241.   The standard view is presented in my *Introduction to the Study of Language.*

speech-feeling. This principle is to the effect that the men-
tal phenomena must be viewed as they actually occur and
not as their products or a record of their occurrence may be
interpreted by an observer after the fact.[5]   It is this principle
which has led to Kretschmer's definition of the sentence as
the linguistic expression of an affect — of a single rise and
fall of the emotion prompting to speech.[6]   It is this principle
which makes it clear that a single word can express only one
separately apperceived element : that it is wrong, for instance,
to interpret a form like *cantat* as containing two such ele-
ments.   A leisurely student may reinterpret such a form into
a logical judgment predicating the act of singing of a certain
person, but the logical judgment is not present in the
speaker's mind when the sentence-word *cantat* is spoken ;
for what we mean by saying that *cantat* is felt as a single
word (and not as two words) is exactly this, that it contains
no opportunity for an apperceptive (and hence for a logical)
act of division.   The speaker's experience is simply that of a
known and definite person's singing ; his expressive reaction
is a habitual unit, *cantat*, and such morphologic structure as
we find in this word is merely associative ; it exists only by
virtue of the parallelism and contrast of other forms and is
not explicit in the utterance itself.   Finally, pursuing the
same principle, I have suggested (*T.A.P.A.* xLv, 65 ff.) that
even where there is a word-boundary, there is in most in-
stances of utterance no apperceptive division; that, for
instance, the English sentence, *she is singing*, is usually
spoken in much the same way as the Latin, Italian, or Slavic
one-word equivalent, and differs from the latter primarily
only in being occasionally used for an attentively discrimi-
nating statement, *shé is singing*, which corresponds to Italian
ella canta, not to Italian *canta*, Latin *cantat*.

   If we keep this principle in view, it is not difficult, I believe,

   [5] See James, *Psychology*, 1890, I, 166 f., 274 f. (the " psychologist's fallacy ")
and Wundt, *Grundriss d. Psychologie*[11], 13 (the fallacy is " die eigenen Reflexi-
onen des Psychologen über die Tatsachen in diese selbst zu verlegen "), *Logik*[3],
III, 150 f., and, generally, the works of the latter author.
   [6] In Gercke and Norden, *Einl. in d. Altertumswissenschaft*[2], I, 516.

to reach a clearer understanding of the nature of predication in language.[7]

I. We may consider first a type of sentence about which there can be little question. If, in the course of a philosophical discussion, there occurs the statement, *homo mortalis est*, it is obvious that this sentence may well be the linguistic expression of a logical judgment. To the logical subject, that talked about and underlying the predication (τὸ ὑποκείμενον), corresponds the word *homo*, and to the logical predicate, that said about the subject (τὸ κατηγορούμενον), corresponds the phrase *mortalis est*. It is a natural transference of terms — but we must not forget that it is a transference of terms — to call the linguistic element corresponding to the logical subject a grammatical or linguistic 'subject' and to speak similarly of a grammatical or linguistic ' predicate.'

Another type of sentence differs from this by the absence of the verb : *beatus ille homo ;* the division into subject and predicate is, however, no less clear. This type, entirely lacking in English, is in Russian, for instance, the only form for non-narrative statements of a certain kind: *mužík běden* ' peasant poor ', *i.e.* 'the peasant is poor.'

Such examples as these have played an unduly important part in the development of syntactic theory. A student confronted by the task of analyzing his speech enters into a state of abnormally careful attention ; this attention he exercises not only in the analysis, but also, inappropriately, in forming his examples, which, in consequence, are logically constructed statements of the type we have described, rather than casual phrases.

We may, however, take an utterance of this very type, such as *he is a lucky fellow*, and, with a different distribution of pause, duration, pitch, and stress, utter it not as the expression of a deliberate judgment, but as an enthusiastic exclama-

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[7] In accordance with this principle the process of sentence-utterance has been most vividly and exactly described by James in his *Psychology*, 1, 260–263 ; the consequences for linguistic theory were not in this connection (nor, so far as I know, in any other place) drawn by this great philosopher. See also Morris, *T.A.P.A.* xlvi, 103 ff., esp. 110.

tion, *he's a lucky fellow !*, or we may half plaintively, half
enviously mutter, *he's a lucky fellow !* In these instances
the speaker's frame of mind is far removed from that of logi-
cal predication.   He is expressing primarily an emotion, and
his speech comes forth without any apperceptive jointings.
Though it is easy enough, once the words are spoken and
remembered, to interpret the sentence, in cold blood, into a
judgment, yet our task is not to interpret what the speaker
may or should have meant to say, but to analyze the expres-
sion itself.   It is an expression of emotion at a certain state
of affairs, and lacks logical structure.

    Yet there is a reservation.   Although our ejaculation of
wonder or envy differs in accentual features from the calm
judgment, *he is a lucky fellow*, the two utterances are the
same so far as distinctive word-form is concerned ; and,
what is more, the casual ejaculation is accompanied by a
peculiar feeling-tone, a subtle and indescribable sense of com-
pleteness or roundedness, whose presence we are wont to
signal by calling the statement a 'complete predication' or a
'complete sentence.'   This appears clearly when we con-
trast *he's a lucky fellow !* with the otherwise equivalent *lucky
fellow !* which lacks this tone of completeness.

    This circumstance bears its explanation on the face of it :
*the language from which our example is taken uses for many
non-logical utterances the same distinctive word-forms as for
the expression of a logical judgment.*   If we ignore — as per-
haps we have the right to ignore temporarily — certain fea-
tures of duration, pitch, and stress, then we may say that the
expression of a logical judgment (predicating, *e.g.*, a state of
happiness of a known person) is often the same, in English,
or Latin, and probably in most languages, as a rather ex-
plicit exclamation (*e.g.* of envy or surprise at the circumstance
of his happiness).   If we wish to keep the terms 'linguistic
subject' and 'linguistic predicate,' we must therefore define
them not straightway as the linguistic expressions of a logical
subject and predicate, but rather as *linguistic elements which
can be used in this function, but are used also in other utter-
ances, as components of a habitual sentence-type.*

II. The type of sentence we have so far examined is in Latin and in Russian confined to non-narrative statements and therefore relatively often used as the expression of a logical thought-content. Of other types this is less true. When we say, *then Mary bought a hat,* we are usually in a narrative frame of mind ; a concrete and colorful picture floats past the 'inner eye,' and from logical judgment we are far removed. To make a sentence of this type express a logical judgment we must postulate some rather strained situation, in which moreover the accentual features of the utterance will be entirely different. Outside of such unusual situations our sentence is by no means the utterance of a logical predicating-experience ; yet it presents the characteristic structure which allows us to analyze it into a linguistic subject and predicate.

These linguistic predications of the narrative type differ in Latin and in Russian from those of equational type (*homo mortalis est, beatus ille*) because these latter in Russian always and in Latin optionally lack the finite verb. In English, German, and French the two types are merged.

Now, it is a fundamental principle of linguistic study that we have no right to inject into our analysis of a language distinctions not expressed in the language. If, therefore, we borrow the technical terms ' subject ' and ' predicate ' from logic for such a sentence as *man is mortal,* we are bound to keep them also for the structurally similar *Mary bought a hat,* and consequently to distinguish between the use of these terms in logic and their use in linguistics.

No doubt the extensive use in our languages of linguistic subject and predicate in non-logical utterances has contributed to the induration of the traditional rationalizing view, which tries to see in every sentence of language the expression of a logical judgment. We are now in a position to clear up some of the difficulties to which this view has led. For instance, Wundt, who strictly identifies linguistic subject and predicate with those of logic, is forced to make the following inconsistent statement (*Völkerps.* II³, 270): "If the speaker ever for the nonce grammatically chooses a subject different from that

which logically he might intend to make his subject, then he
has given his thought an inadequate form; in which case, to
be sure, other than purely logical motives, such as euphony
and the rhythm of speech, may at times excuse the devia-
tion." Now, it is not for us to make excuses for a speaker or
to heap humiliation and reproach upon him if he fails to
accord with our theories of syntax. The situation Wundt
describes is merely this, — and it is in our languages a very
frequent one — that the linguistic subject and predicate would
not, under a logical reinterpretation of the sentence, produce
a correct logical judgment. Or, more exactly: if we write
down the sentence and then read it with logical intonation,
we may find the subject and predicate poorly chosen for the
logical purposes of the situation. If I say, *The hat was
priced at five dollars. A woman went in and bought it*,
my second sentence, under logical interpretation, would pre-
sent a poorly chosen subject, for it is the hat and not the
unknown woman that ought, logically, to be the subject of the
new statement; I should say: *The hat was priced at five
dollars. It was bought by a woman who had entered the
store in order to buy it*. This deviation of linguistic sub-
ject and predicate from a logical norm is, however, not, as
Wundt's words suggest, a rare or occasional feature, but will
be found extremely common in our languages.

III. While in modern English, German, or French the
great majority of narrative sentences exhibits the structure of
linguistic predication, this is not true of the older stages of
these languages, of Latin, Italian, Greek and Slavic, or, in
general, of the older type of Indo-European speech. These
latter languages possess a kind of narrative sentence in which
a linguistic subject and predicate cannot be found: the
simplest instances are sentences of one word, such as *cantat*.
Of whatever parts such an utterance may consist, they are
not separated from each other by any apperceptive analysis,
such as that of logical predication; if they were, we should
speak of several words, not of one word. In English, for
instance, a word such as *stones* contains two associatively

joined elements ; if we attentively separate these, we no longer use a single word, but speak of *several stones* or *some stones*, expressing the plurality by a separate word. So a Latin speaker, if he apperceptively analyzed the experience into an actor and an action, would no longer say *cantat*, but *illa cantat* (Italian *ella canta*, Russian *oná pojót*). The analysis into object and number in *stones*, into actor and action in *cantat* is never explicit; the word as a whole corresponds to the experience as a whole ; this experience is associated with other partially unlike experiences, which are expressed by similar words, such as *stone, stony* (same material element) or *trees, rivers* (same element of number), *cantās, cantābat* (same element of action) or *saltat, dormit* (same element of actor); but the analysis involved in the existence and association of these parallel words is merely implicit and associative. We have therefore no right to speak of a linguistic subject and predicate in a sentence like *cantat*.

Two factors have led to the forced interpretation which sees in *cantat* a subject and a predicate. One is the obvious similarity between such a one-word sentence and an English *she is singing*. The two might be used by a bilingual speaker of English and Italian of one and the same experience. To those who see in the English sentence the expression of a logical judgment, the obvious similarity of the English and the Latin-Italian sentences is a motive for seeking in the latter also a logical predication. For us, however, the similarity between the two types confirms the conclusion that normally the linguistic subject-and-predicate structure of the English sentence does not express any apperceptive analysis of the experience, but is merely a habitual formality.

The second factor is this : the duality of elements in *cantat* does correspond in a striking way to the duality in *she is singing* or *elle chante*. This correspondence has, however, in principle nothing to do with subject and predicate, and consists only in this, that Latin, like the modern languages, analyzes the situation into actor and action — though, to be sure, by a merely implicit analysis, whereas the English, French, or German sentence is at least capable of attentive

separation. When an author is persuaded that the Latin word "contains a subject," he is mistaking an actor for a subject, a fallacy induced by the circumstance that in English, German, and French the subject is always viewed as an actor. To use the term 'subject' for 'acting person or object' would be an unwarrantable extension of the term which could only create confusion. Both the Latin *cantat* and the English *she is singing* are expressions of actor and action, but only the latter contains a (linguistic) subject and predicate.

One class of sentences of the ancient one-word type has received special attention from linguistic students, that of utterances about the weather, such as *pluit*. Both Paul (*op. cit.* 130 f.) and Wundt (*Völkerps.* II³, 227 f.) see in these a subject and predicate.[8] From our standpoint there are two reasons why this cannot be true. Psychologically it is not correct to attribute an act of logical judgment to a speaker who merely says *pluit* or *piove* or *it's raining*. His act of apperception is by no means an analytic one : he takes the experience as a whole without breaking it up into an underlying element and a predication about it. Linguistically, we mean, when we call *pluit* or *piove* a single word, that it is not capable of expressing more than one apperceptively grasped element of experience.

The ancients were able to make a logical extension of such a sentence as *pluit ;* when they did so, they said Ζεὺς ὕει or *Iuppiter tonat*. Strepsiades asks, ἀλλὰ τίς ὕει ; and his answer is, in burlesque form, the ancient view. As our analysis, today, when we devote attentive thought to meteorological phenomena, is rather akin to that of Socrates in the *Clouds*, we are forced, at such times, to diverge far from the usual utterance, *it's raining*.[9] The linguistic subject and predicate in the English *it's raining* thus give us an example of a linguistic predication which never represents a logical judgment.

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[8] Delbrück at first rejected this view, but later hesitates; cf. *Grundriss*, v, 37.

[9] This way of talking about the weather has come to us from of old, when the *it* still represented a concrete actor. Traces of the old state of affairs in Germanic in Grimm, *Deutsche Grammatik*, IV, 228.

If these examples have made clear to us the general nature of linguistic predication, especially in its divergence from logical predication or judgment, we may, in conclusion, briefly note a few of the features of linguistic subject and predicate that appear in our languages.

We have already had occasion to see that in English, German, and French the linguistic subject is looked upon as an actor and the linguistic predicate as an action performed by this actor: *Mary bought a hat, she is singing*, and even *it is raining*. This, indeed, is universal, no matter how inappropriate the identification may seem when we reflect upon it: *I hear a noise, Mont Blanc is high, the house was built, the house is being built*, and so on.

This is not true in Slavic or in Latin. Both of these forms of speech add a second type of linguistic predication, in which subject and predicate are viewed as equated terms: *beatus ille*.

Latin has a third type, in which the linguistic subject is not an actor, but an object fully affected or produced by the action-predicate: *domus struitur*. As this construction is known as the 'passive,' we may define this term in accordance with the conditions in Latin: in a language which employs a construction (morphologic or syntactic) of actor and action, a parallel construction in which some other feature is coupled with action, is a passive.

This somewhat obvious definition is worth formulating because there has been some uncertainty as to the application of the term. Most writers find in the Philippine languages three 'passives' (so the Spanish writers and with them H. C. von der Gabelentz, *Abh. Sächs. Gesell.* VIII, 481), but Wilhelm von Humboldt (*Kawi-Sprache* II = *Abh. Berl. Akad.* 1832, 3. Teil, 150) refused to apply this term to the Philippine constructions; he is followed in this by the best of our Philippine grammars, the late Dr. Seidenadel's description of the Bontoc Igorot language. Under our definition the Philippine constructions will receive the name of passives, as may be seen from a few examples taken from Tagalog. There is an actor-and-action construction, *e.g. sya*

y sumúlat naŋ líham, ' he wrote a letter.' Beside this there is a sentence-type in which the (linguistic) subject is the object fully affected or produced, somewhat as in the Latin passive: *sinúlat nya aŋ líham*, ' was-written by-him the letter,' *i.e.* ' he wrote the letter '; this we may call the ' direct passive.' Secondly, there is a ' local passive,' in which the subject is the person, thing, or locality less fully affected by the action-predicate, as though an Indo-European dative or locative should become the subject of a passive construction : *sinulátan nya akó*, ' was-written-to by-him I,' *i.e.* ' he wrote to me.' Finally, there is a construction which we may call the 'instrumental passive,' in which the subject is the means or instrument or that given forth — in part somewhat as though an Indo-European instrumental could become the subject in a passive construction : *isinúlat nya aŋ kwénto*, ' was-written-down by-him the story,' *i.e.* ' he wrote down the story.' It may be worth mentioning that these languages have also the type of sentence in which the experience is not viewed as an action : *mabúti sya* or *sya y mabúte*, ' bonus ille.'

For the sake of completeness we may refer to another feature which has been confounded with subject and predicate. G. von der Gabelentz (*Die Sprachwissenschaft*[2], 369 ff.) invented the expression " psychological subject," which he used to name what we should call (with Wundt) the emotionally dominant element of the sentence: *e.g.*, in *today is my birthday* the " psychological subject " is *my*. Wundt (*Völkerps*. II[3], 268 ff.) shows conclusively that the terms ' subject ' and ' predicate ' are here entirely inappropriate. Whatever the exact relation may be between an emotionally dominant element and the apperceptive processes, such as underlie logical judgment, a confusion of terms can have only bad results. It is interesting to see that in certain languages, namely Celtic and French, there is a tendency to identify the emotionally dominant element with a linguistic predicate: compare the Irish-English fondness for such constructions as *it's he that did it.*